

Thank you Mr. Chair & Committee Members

Tom Frazier, Legislative Liaison, Michigan Townships Association

Let me start off by saying that MTA has a policy platform position of supporting the concept of early voting if modified to accommodate communities with clerks that do not maintain full-time business hours. Having said that, we see significant problems to overcome with these two bills. General concerns include:

A logistical problem, as a large percentage of township clerks are either part time or work out of their homes.

Many clerks have other full time jobs and do not hold regular full-time business hours. Currently, hours may be limited, but the township residents know those hours and can work around them.

Additionally, who would compensate locals units for the added coverage? Local government offices would likely be required to be open at least 8 hours per day for either 7 or 14 days in advance of the election.

Clerks have to be open the Saturday before the election already, and in most cases, at least in rural areas, no one comes in that day to vote. If we added additional days to this process, we would be paying for a service that very few people, if any, would utilize.

Again, voters can already vote in person the Saturday (9-2 p.m.) and the Monday (9-4 p.m.) (late AV ballot) before the election if the need arises.

Ballot security. How would the tabulators be secured each night?

Clerks are already extremely busy the last week before an election planning for Election Day activities. This would take their focus away from those responsibilities.

### **Specific Concerns with HB 4090:**

14 days is too early. This length of time is not needed and will only create additional costs and logistical problems for local clerks. If four elections per year are held, then we are talking an additional 48 days per year that an office would need to be fully staffed... AND that is after taking out two days per election for the Saturday and Monday that the clerk currently needs to be there anyway.

### **Specific Concerns about HB 4508**

It says that a registered elector can appear at anytime 7 days before an election, except on a Sunday or holiday. Does that include 10:00 p.m. at night?

If agreement with the county clerk is reached, it still provides difficulty for the voter:

In many instances, it would require voters to travel long distances to vote early.

In addition, requiring local residents to go elsewhere may provide confusion.

Would the county clerk expect additional compensation to cover expenses? I doubt that they would provide this service free of charge.

Voters could easily get the wrong ballot, as the county clerk would be dealing with a variety of different local government ballots.

Are county clerk offices equipped to provide the staffing needs?  
Many county clerk offices have space limitations too.

The bill calls for a clerk to make available a voting machine to allow an absent voter to check his or her ballot for errors without tabulating the ballot. However, unless technology has changed within the last two years, I don't believe that this is even possible...AND if the ballot is counted, what about voter fraud and the release of tabulated results to date, possibly impacting the outcome of an election? This also leads to privacy issues, space allotment issues, and security issues.

Finally, the bill would be creating two classes of AV voters. One who must state one of the current 6 reasons for requesting an AV ballot and the other person who can walk into a clerk's office and vote an AV ballot for any reason. One gets to check their ballot for accuracy and other does not.

In summary, I appreciate the willingness of both bill sponsors to work with us on some of these issues and thank Chairman Corriveau for his willingness to put together a workgroup to attempt to resolve many of these issues.

Thank you Mr. Chairman & Members.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.